

Methodology

Why Track Development?

The Marketing Center began tracking development at the beginning of 2001 with the hopes of answering a number of frequently asked questions about the nature of development activity in the District of Columbia. While it was clear that a significant amount of construction and renovation was taking place, it was difficult to quantify. Through our research, we discovered that there were some good sources of information, but none were truly comprehensive, including both public and private projects, new construction and renovation, commercial and residential, institutional and infrastructure.

Our goal was to create a comprehensive database of development activity that would help us find answers to the following questions:

- What is the make-up of development activity?
- Where is development activity occurring?
- What are the trends?
- How much is being invested in our community?

What do we track?

Projects over \$1 million

Because of the tremendous amount of construction activity and staff resources required to maintain the data, we established a minimum threshold of \$1 million to be included in the database.

Who?

Developer – As one of our primary sources of information, we maintain contact information on developers and other controlling interests in development projects.

Financing Sources – Whenever possible, we identify public and private funding sources.

Sources of Information – Because we track data from a variety of sources, we identify sources of attribution for each record in our database.

What?

Project Name – Project names are generally the name of the building or the development. However, when projects are referenced by different sources with different names, we use the most commonly referenced name of the project. When there is no name for the project, projects are referenced by address.

Costs – We track total development costs including both hard and soft costs associated with a project. Whenever possible, we use actual costs provided by the developer or from building permit data. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to estimate project costs. When estimating costs, we use \$300 per square foot for office, \$200,000 per unit for residential including single-family and multifamily over four stories and \$100,000 per unit for multi-family four stories and under, and \$125,000 per room for hotel. Because retail costs vary significantly depending on the project and tenant finish out, we do not estimate retail development costs based on a square foot or unit costs.

Square Footage – All of the projects in the database include the total square footage of the project. For mixed-use projects, we break out the square footage associated with each major use, and in the case of residential and hotel developments we track the number of units and rooms.

Description – Complex projects and mixed-use development include a description that highlights key components and other points of interest about a development project.

Photo – Many of the projects in our database include one or more photos, renderings, elevations or other illustrations.

Type – Components of each project are categorized as one of the following:

New Construction
Renovation
Infrastructure

Use – Each project is categorized by type of use. For mixed-use developments, we capture the square footage for each of the following:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| • Community | • Government |
| • Medical | • Retail |
| • Educational | • Hotel |
| • Museum | |
| • Entertainment | • Industrial Offices |
| • Residential | |

Number of Units – For residential projects, we track the number of units of both new construction and renovation. The number of new residential units does not necessarily reflect the net new units on the market because it does not account for units take out of the inventory.

Number of Rooms – For hotel projects, we track the number new rooms and renovated rooms.

When?

Groundbreaking – The groundbreaking can be the date of a groundbreaking event or the date that a building permit is issued on a project.

Delivery – Delivery date is an estimate of when a project is scheduled to be completed. For completed projects, this is the date that the project was completed.

Status – Each project is tracked by status and defined by one of the following categories:

Proposed – Proposed projects are defined as a potential development where a developer, individual, or organization has ability and interest in developing a project and has made that interest public.

Planned – Projects are defined as planned when a developer has site control and funds committed or the project has received approval from the Office of Zoning.

Under Construction – Projects are defined as under construction once a building permit has been issued on the project.

Completed – Projects are defined as completed once the first certificate of occupancy is issued on a project, except in the case of a multi-phase project, where each phase of the project is tracked separately.

Where?

Enterprise Zone – Each project is identified as being located in a primary or secondary enterprise zone.

Ward – The Ward identified for each project is based off of the 2000 Ward boundaries.

Zip Code – Zip codes are tracked for mapping purposes as defined by data from our geographic information system (GIS) and may not reflect the actual US Postal zip code for that address.

Street address – Street addresses are tracked and geocoded, allowing us to map development activity.

Where do we get our information?

To capture the most comprehensive inventory, we use a variety of sources to gather information about development activity, and whenever possible, we contact the developers directly to get the most up

to date and accurate information available. Often our research uncovers discrepancies in available data on project information such as square footage, cost, number of units, etc. When this occurs, we try to reconcile the differences by speaking directly with parties involved in the development or by

Brokers

Building Permit Data

Certificates of Occupancy

CoStar

Developers

The Downtown DC Business Improvement District

FW Dodge

Newspapers and neighborhood newsletters

DC Office of Planning

Office of the Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development
Revenue Bonds

Adding or Updating Information

If you are looking for information about a specific project that you do not see on our list, it may have been omitted for one of the following reasons.

1. It did not meet the \$1 million threshold. There is simply too much activity for us to keep accurate information about every improvement made in the District of Columbia. Therefore, we only collect data for projects valued over \$1 million.

2. We are missing a key piece of information. Generally we will include projects in our database even if we do not have a complete set of data available. However, some projects are omitted from our reports and analyses if they are missing key data that we use to query or analyze the database.

3. We have questions about the validity of our data. We make every effort to acquire data from multiple sources to validate our information. Frequently, we encounter discrepancies in project details. Whenever possible we try to reconcile those discrepancies. Sometimes, we are unable, and we may exclude the project because of an unresolved question about the data.

4. We may not know about it. Although our data collection methods are comprehensive, we may miss projects. We discover new information almost every day, and we are constantly adding projects as we become aware of them.

If you have information about a development that you would like included in our database or if you have discovered errors in our data, please let us know. We rely on your feedback to keep our database accurate.

To add or update a record to our database, please contact:

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